

LANDMARK POSTCODE

5223

New Zealand Fur Seals, Off Admirals Arch, Flinders Chase National Park, Kangaroo Island.
Image courtesy of the South Australian Tourism Commission.

Story: Sheryl Allen

LOCATION: Kingscote
4 hours south west of Adelaide
(car and ferry)

POPULATION: 1,700

INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, fishing, forestry,
tourism

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer: 14.9°C – 26.3°C
Winter: 8.4°C – 14.6°C
Rainfall: 483mm

Pure. Pristine. Productive. Kangaroo Island is fast growing a reputation as a clean, green destination for visitors, business-owners, producers and those seeking a relaxed lifestyle.

Kingscote, the island's largest town, is home to around 1,700 people. It is South Australia's oldest European settlement and the administrative and service centre for the island. It boasts a major supermarket, hotels, hospital, area school, specialty shops, government offices, plus a colony of the smallest penguins in the world!

During 2008/2009 some 185,000 visitors came to Kangaroo Island. One third were international travellers attracted by the remote island environment, the wilderness, the unique wildlife, the unspoilt beaches and iconic rock formations. Not to mention the world-famous food and wine.

According to Landmark's Ben Wilks, the tourist phenomenon is a tremendous boom for islanders. "There is an amazing selection of accommodation options on offer: resorts, hotels, bed and breakfasts, farm-stays and camping zones.

And there's a seemingly endless passion for the island's produce. It all returns value back to the local economy."

It wasn't always that way. Early islanders eked out livelihoods from the bush and the bays – they felled timber, snared possums, distilled wild eucalyptus, trapped fish.

Buoyed by reliable rainfall, the fertile lands soon opened up to pastoral pursuits, mainly wool and grain.

"The rainfall varies across the island," explains Ben. "Anything from 500 to 900 mm per annum, increasing as you travel westward over the island's 150-kilometre width. It makes for profitable farm production and excellent stocking rates."

Today's robust agricultural sector owes much to the post World War 2 Soldier Settlement Scheme which saw 174 families each allocated 1,200 acres on the island's central plateau.

"We're seeing that trend into larger holdings," says Landmark's Damien McCauley. "Neighbour purchases and part-purchases have lifted the traditional holding up to 1,800 or 2,400 acres. Currently grain and feed cropping, prime lambs and cattle are the agricultural mainstays, but there is plenty of diversification. About 50,000 acres are currently growing blue gums and the rock lobster industry is huge with numerous scale licencees operating out of Kingscote and Emu Bay."

Many specialty producers cater for the "foodies" who can't seem to get enough of the island's gastronomic delights. There's pure honey, a myriad of cheeses, the freshest seafood, world-class olive

oil and, of course, wine.

There's plenty going on. "These are very exciting times for our grain-growers," says Ben, "with the recent launch of KI Pure Grain, to take over the handling and marketing of the island's grain to national and international markets."

It's no wonder then that the property market here is also doing well. "We get interest from potential mainland buyers and local producers looking to up their landholdings," explains Damien. "Residential buyers are also chasing some great value here, especially the selection of properties with spectacular island views. Recent land subdivisions offer seaviews from lots up to five acres. Where else could you secure a block from \$97,000 perfect for your dream home overlooking the ocean?"

This 4,400 square kilometre island is surrounded by 457 kilometres of stunning coastline from which to dream ... pure island magic.

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: quality four-bedroom home
\$370,000

Rural: average quality grazing property
\$800 – \$1,500 per acre

Rural lifestyle: up to 200 acres with quality
home \$2,000 – \$2,500 per acre